

S River Drive, 9th
388.312 to 15th Streets
T66frd North, W 5205(7),
1993 Great Falls,
Cascade County,
Montana, federal
aid urban route

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River Drive, 9th to 15th Streets North,



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RIVER DRIVE - 9TH TO 15TH STREETS NORTH
M 5205(7)
GREAT FALLS,
CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA
FEDERAL AID URBAN ROUTE (FAU) 5205

LOCATION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for improvement of the existing River Drive. The proposed action will begin approximately 1,500 feet west of 9th Street North and extend along River Drive to end approximately 500 feet west of 15th Street North.

Improvements are proposed to be scheduled for construction in 1994.

This public scoping meeting is being held to obtain comments from the public to identify alternatives and issues of concern for analysis in the EA.

ALTERNATIVES AND DESIGN OPTIONS

Alternatives under consideration include:

- 1) No action
- 2) Improving River Drive in a location at or near the existing location.

It is expected the alternatives for the proposed action will consider the following elements of design:

- 1) Upgrading the existing two-lane road into a four-lane facility with curb and gutter in accordance with updated standards of safety and design.
- 2) A new intersection of 9th Street North and River Drive, which probably will include a traffic signal.
- 3) Improvement of the existing "S" curves between 9th and 15th Streets North.
- 4) Removal of the existing bridge over the railroad.

- 5) A new pedestrian and bicycle path will be constructed along the entire length of River Drive in the project area. It is proposed there will be an underpass for pedestrians and bicycles located west of 9th Street North underneath the future River Drive alignment.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The proposed action is one of several projects included in the transportation master plan for the area. Along 9th Street North, it will connect the future 10th Street North Connector Bridge project (scheduled for construction in 1994) with the 9th Street North Bridge Approach - South End project, which was completed in 1991.

The proposed action also will connect River Drive to the 15th Street North - River Drive project on the east, which also is scheduled to be constructed in 1994 (please see attached map).

Public comment is important at this time to help identify reasonable and feasible alternatives, along with issues that are of concern.

Representatives of MDT are available to answer questions and receive comments.

A form for your comment is attached to this sheet. Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to:

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONSULTANT DESIGN
ATTN: ROBERT D. MORGAN
2701 PROSPECT AVENUE
PO BOX 201001
HELENA, MT 59620-1001

TELEPHONE: (406) 444-6251

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620



TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN THE RIVER DRIVE AREA

15TH STREET NORTH & RIVER DRIVE, DESIGN
PROJ. NO. F 10-1(9)3

BHM S211 (2) 10TH STREET BRIDGE

RIVER DRIVE M 5205(7)
9TH ST TO 15TH ST NO.

EXISTING BRIDGE

FALLS CONSTRUCTION

RIVER DR

PROPOSED BRIDGE

MISSOURI RIVER
BLK'S PARK

O.F. 979 10 ST.NO. BRIDGE APPROACH

CITY OF GREAT FALLS
BURINGTON RAILROAD

10 AVENUE NORTH

13TH STREET NO

14TH ST NO

15TH ST NO

STREET NO

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 1993

12 August 1993

Montana Department of Transportation
Consultant Design
Attn: Doug Morgan, P.E.
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

Re: M 5205(7): River Drive between 9th Street North and 15th Street North, EA
Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana

Dear Doug:

A public scoping meeting was held on 21 July 1993 to receive comments from the public about alternatives, design options and other issues related to the proposed improvement of River Drive in Great Falls between 9th Street North and 15th Street North.

One session of the meeting was held:

21 July 1993, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Presentation at 7:00 p.m., open discussion following
Conference room of the Lumber Yard Supply Company
Great Falls, MT

The meeting was advertised in the Great Falls Tribune on the following dates:

07 July 1993
21 July 1993

The notice also was sent to all individuals and agencies on the project mailing list.

A written summary and a map of the proposed action were provided to persons attending the meeting. A copy of the summary and map is attached.

Members of the public attending each session of the scoping meeting were asked to leave their name and address in order to place their names on the project mailing list. They will receive notice of future project activities. A list of the names and addresses received at the meeting and the project mailing list are attached.



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<http://archive.org/details/riverdrive9thto100mont>

After an introduction by Robert Morrison of Morrison-Maierle/CSSA's Great Falls office, Mike Wagner of Morrison-Maierle/CSSA made a formal presentation to explain the history of the project, future activities and alternatives proposed for detailed evaluation in the environmental assessment (EA).

A preliminary design drawing was available for the public to comment on location of the roadway, a pedestrian/bicycle path (River's Edge Trail), approaches, utilities and other design options.

After the presentation, there was an open discussion that addressed the important features of the proposed action. Of note, there was discussion about two possible locations for the pedestrian/bicycle path underpass under River Drive in the vicinity of 9th Street North. One route of the path would be beneath the south end of the future 10th Street North Connector Bridge. The other route would be an underpass south of the south end of the bridge, on the north side of the future intersection of 9th Street North with River Drive. It may be possible for Dick Howell, the current MDT pedestrian/bike path coordinator, and Bob Habeck, who will be his successor, to coordinate with local groups to develop the final location of the pedestrian/bicycle path. John Hodnik of Morrison-Maierle/CSSA will meet with Dick Howell and Bob Habeck to explain the situation.

Each person attending the meeting was given the opportunity to meet with a representative of the project to record their comments and suggestions. Two written comments were received at the meeting.

One comment was about concern for the safety of users of the Rivers Edge Trail. The crossing of 9th Street North was of particular concern.

The other comment asked about plans for improving 6th Street Northwest from Central Avenue West to the Northwest Bypass.

Copies of the comments received at the meeting are attached.

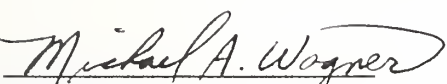
Those attending the meeting were given a copy of a comment form for submitting additional comments to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT).

The following project representatives attended the meeting:

- Doug Morgan, Montana Department of Transportation
- Jim Rearden, City of Great Falls
- Bill Walters, City of Great Falls/Cascade County
- Mike Wagner, Morrison-Maierle/CSSA, Project Manager
- Bob Morrison, Morrison-Maierle/CSSA
- Craig Nowak, Morrison-Maierle/CSSA
- John Hodnik, Morrison-Maierle/CSSA

A summary of the meeting is attached.

Please call if you have questions or comments or need additional information.



Michael A. Wagner, P.E.

Project Manager

Geologist

- Enclosures: Summary and map of proposed action
 Summary of meeting
 Names and addresses received at meeting
 Comments received
 Project mailing list

- cc: (with Summary of meeting enclosure)
 Robert Morrison, Morrison-Maierle/CSSA
 Project mailing list

SUMMARY
RIVER DRIVE - 9TH TO 15TH STREETS NORTH
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
GREAT FALLS, CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA
JULY 21, 1993 at 7:00 P.M.

Bob Morrison of Morrison-Maierle/CSSA (MM/CSSA) introduced the project representatives and discussed the purpose and location of the proposed action to reconstruct approximately ½ mile of River Drive from 9th Street North to 15th Street North. He emphasized that this is a preliminary public scoping meeting to obtain comments and ideas from the public. The alternative routes shown on the displays were preliminary and only intended to help generate comments. Handouts and comment forms were given to everyone to help encourage input.

The next section presents a summary of comments from and discussion among various persons in attendance:

Mike Wagner of MM/CSSA discussed the history of the proposed action and other projects that will be constructed in the area of River Drive and the corridor generally bounded by 9th and 15th Streets North.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is proposing to build three projects to improve transportation in the vicinity of River Drive: 1) the proposed action to improve River Drive between 9th and 15th streets north; 2) the future 9th-10th Streets North (connector) Bridge); 2) the River Drive and 15th Street Intersection project on the east end. All three projects are scheduled for construction beginning in 1994.

It is expected that the construction of the future 10th Street Connector Bridge will take approximately two to three years, while this project will be completed in a single construction season. Therefore, a temporary facility connecting River Drive and the existing 10th Street North bridge will be necessary. It is recommended that the existing River Drive be used as the temporary facility, rather than constructing a new facility that will be removed when the future bridge is complete.

It is expected that construction of 9th Street North under this project will be terminated at the south shoulder of the existing River Drive Road. The future bridge project will construct the remaining portion of 9th Street that is located north of the existing River Drive.

The City of Great Falls has indicated that at this time, there are no plans to widen River Drive to four lanes west of 9th Street North. The City also indicated an interest in extending one of the streets between 9th and 15th streets, perhaps either 11th or 12th streets, northward to connect to River Drive. A study is currently underway by the city planning office to determine preferences of residents in the area for extending a street to meet River Drive.

The full four-lane typical with center median will be extended only as far west of 9th Street North as necessary to develop the proper length of auxiliary lanes (left-turn and possibly right-turn lanes) and then it will taper down to match the existing River Drive alignment in as short a distance as possible.

The existing pedestrian/bicycle path (River's Edge Trail) in the area will be redesigned and reconstructed for the entire length of this project. It is expected that an underpass will be built for the path to cross River Drive somewhere east of 9th Street North in order to separate bike traffic from roadway traffic.

The Great Falls Recreational Trails Committee will provide recommendations for the design requirements and location of the pedestrian/bicycle path.

Public Questions or Comments:

SCHEDULE AND CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

- Several members of the audience expressed concern about the time it will take to complete this project and the effects on access to businesses in the area. Doug Morgan of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) responded that there will be some disruption, but it is standard policy for some form of access to be maintained to businesses throughout the period of construction. Everyone agreed access needs to be coordinated throughout construction.

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE PATH

- Doug Wicks pointed out that the current MDT plans for the new bridge show a 10' walkway on the upstream side, rather than two smaller walkways on each side as shown on the cross-section displayed at the meeting. Doug Morgan verified this. MDT will send a current version of the bridge typical to MM/CSSA.
- General questions about the pedestrian/bicycle path were asked regarding the schedule and possible conflicts with the large gas main crossing River Drive. Mike Wagner and Doug Morgan of MDT indicated the pedestrian/bicycle path will be built as a part of the proposed action, starting in 1994.

Mike Wagner noted the 24" natural gas line that feeds Great Falls Gas Company crosses far enough westward that it should not be necessary to disturb it with construction of the pedestrian/bike path.

- There was discussion of alternative routes for the pedestrian/bicycle path, including two possible locations for the pedestrian/bicycle path crossing in the vicinity of 9th Street North. One route of the path would be beneath the south end of the Future 10th Street North Connector Bridge. The other route would follow along an underpass south of the south end of the new bridge, just north of the future intersection of River Drive and 9th Street. Alternative routes also were identified along the part of the path that will reconnect with the railroad right of way from River Drive. The Great Falls Recreational Trails Committee (GFRTC), in cooperation with all affected land owners in the area, will review their preference for the location of the pedestrian/bicycle path. GFRTC will recommend a route and provide its recommended design standards to MM/CSSA.
- Dan Huestis of Falls Construction inquired about safety measures if the pedestrian/bicycle path crosses the roadway and traffic at grade. Mike Wagner indicated that an underpass is scheduled to be used somewhere west of 9th Street North to cross under River Drive and separate the pedestrian/bicycle path from traffic. To his understanding, the bike trail will cross 9th Street underneath the south end of the Future 10th Street Connector Bridge. Thus, the bike path will cross both River Drive and 9th Street within this projects' boundaries via a grade separation, thereby minimizing vehicular traffic verses biker/pedestrian conflicts.
- Lyle Meeks recommended minimizing at-grade crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists. He asked if a box culvert could be used under 9th Street North. Mike Wagner said some type of underpass with a box culvert or cast in place concrete structure was planned.
- Lyle also said there should be consideration of impacts to the pedestrian/bicycle path if the City extends 11th or 12th Streets North toward River Drive. The impact would be due primarily to more traffic and more crossings at streets and developed access. However, in this area, the bike path will follow along the abandoned Milwaukee Railroad berm, which is located north of River Drive. The streets will "Tee" intersect on the south side of River Drive, so there will not be conflicts between bikers/pedestrians and vehicular traffic if any of the streets between 9th and 15th are extended to intersect with River Drive.
- A member of the audience indicated fencing and other safety measures should be considered to provide separation between the roadway and the pedestrian/bicycle path. Project representatives agreed the design of the path would consider all appropriate safety measures.

- Lyle Meeks asked how the pedestrian and bicycle traffic would connect to the walkway on the Future 10th Street North Connector Bridge. Mike Wagner indicated the site is level enough to easily make the transition from the bridge to the pedestrian/bicycle path.
- Lyle also asked if the pedestrian/bicycle path would be paved in the project area. Mike replied that everything within the project area would be paved except the area right around the Future 10th Street Connector Bridge. In this area, the bikepath would be left unpaved until the bridge construction is completed. It is anticipated that that part of the bike trail would then be paved under the Future Bridge contract.

TRAFFIC PATTERNS

- Dan Huestis said the majority of traffic from the east on River Drive currently turns north onto 15th Street North. With the improvement, this probably will change, and the new bridge at 9th Street North will receive the majority of the traffic, including large trucks.
- Dan stated that squaring up River Drive with 9th Street North would be a better idea than the intersection alignment as shown on the preliminary drawing. Building the intersection with 90 degree angles will help truck traffic flow and turning conditions.

Mike Wagner explained the alignment shown on the preliminary drawing was intended to stimulate discussion and will be considered along with other alignments for the preferred alignment. Mike indicated the angle of the intersection should be as close as possible to 90 degrees.

- Dan also recommended keeping the intersection as far south of the Future 10th Street Connector Bridge as possible along 9th Street North. He said a longer distance would increase safety making possible wider curb cuts, which are especially convenient for large trucks. City ordinance allows 45 ft. for commercial curb cuts, and Dan thinks curb cuts should be about 50 feet at minimum.
- Owen Robinson of Lumber Yard Supply indicated longer curb cuts for big trucks to make the turns into the lumber yard was a concern.
- Del Henry of the Missouri River Diner also expressed concern about having adequate access with curb and gutter with elevations designed to match his property. Mike Wagner responded that the new curb and gutter should match up well with the east side of the diner's parking area, although there may be some cut on the west side of the property.
- Les Howard of Pepsi Cola Bottling, similar to other businesses in the area, expressed concern about maintaining access to the Pepsi Cola Bottling warehouse from River Drive. Les said big trucks use this approach, and it is very tight now. Mike Wagner indicated the options are limited in this area as to moving River Drive, and Pepsi might lose about 20 feet of their property. However, Mike also noted that the center turn lane should help the turning trucks by providing more room within the roadway.

GARY LEWIS, LEWIS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

- Gary Lewis of Lewis Construction Company noted the importance of maintaining access adequate for large trucks turning into his property from River Drive. He prefers an approach on River Drive opposite Falls Construction. Gary also asked about possible access to the construction company's property if there is an extension of 11th or 12th Streets North. Gary will discuss this with the City as the study proceeds to consider the extension of streets in the River Drive corridor between 9th and 15th Streets North.
- Mike Wagner responded that the proposed action will generally be designed in compliance with city codes, although the design will consider waivers in appropriate circumstances. He explained that although the Montana Department of Transportation standards will take precedence over all others, there should be room to satisfy everyone and still comply with these standards.
- Dan asked if a traffic study has been done for the possible extension of one of the streets between 9th and 15th Streets North to River Drive. He indicated that through traffic would not use any north-south streets other than 9th or 15th Streets North because there isn't any destination at the ends of those streets.

Jim Rearden of the city/county planning office indicated the City will be doing a study and would not extend one of these streets if there was no interest or good reason to do it.

RIGHT-OF-WAY

- Owen Robinson with Lumber Yard Supply Company expressed concern that the lumber yard will lose land at the north edge of the property for new right-of-way along the new River Drive alignment. He also was concerned about keeping land available for use by the lumber yard on the south side of the property if there was to be an extension of 12th Street North to River Drive. He would not recommend an extension of 12th Street North.
- Lyle Meeks asked what will be done with the land remaining between the two rights-of-way (the old Burlington Northern Railroad and the new right-of-way) and whether the two rights-of-way would be contiguous? Mike Wagner replied that the right of way would probably be contiguous as MDT's policy is not to leave uneconomical, remaining parcels of land.

- Del Henry asked whether the land west of the Missouri River Diner extending to 9th Street North will become city park land. Jim Rearden of the city/county planning office indicated the study process will consider acquisition of that type of land throughout the project area to develop open space and park land.
- Les Howard asked whether there was any development planned in the area west of the intersection of River Drive and 15th Street North. No one in the audience indicated any knowledge of planned development in that area. Further discussion identified the old railroad right-of-way, which has become property of the City, as the only land in the area with adequate room for development. There was general agreement that there is no more room for development opposite River Drive (to the north) and away from the Pepsi Cola Bottling warehouse.

DESIGN FEATURES

- Dan Huestis recommended materials used in fills be considered carefully. (Refer to the section below on hazardous materials.) Dan also recommended that the design attempt to minimize cuts. Mike Wagner explained curb and gutter typical sections allow the design to have very few cuts or fills, as the section lends itself to matching the existing topography.
- Lyle Meeks inquired whether construction will take care of holes or hills outside the right-of-way, and he indicated levelling terrain and landscaping outside the two rights of way (old Burlington Northern and the new right of way) to clean up the area would be a benefit to the area. It was noted that this may be up to the City if MDT does not want to do work outside of right of way. Jim Rearden of the city/county planning office indicated much of the area is already much improved. It also was noted that this project may be able to use some of the extra dirt for fill material.
- Lyle also asked about installation of a new storm drain on 15th Street North. Jim Rearden said the City planned to put a large pipe (106") sleeve under 15th Street North to accommodate the future storm drain.
- The general audience indicated interest in the availability and use of enhancement funds for landscaping under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Mike Wagner indicated that if the Montana Department of Transportation so chooses, landscaping will be considered in the design of the proposed action.

- Del Henry asked if the roadway would have lighting. Del and Dan Huestis expressed some desire for lighting provisions. Mike Wagner responded that the need for lighting will be considered in the design of the proposed action.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE AREA

- There was general agreement that the proposed action and the other two projects for improving the River Drive corridor will be "good" projects that improve the appearance and function of the area. A comment from the audience indicated a series of time-lapse photographs which would provide interesting documentation of improvements. There was no commitment from project representatives to provide such photography, beyond the normal documentation of progress in completing a project. Dan Huestis recommended that Doug Wicks be assigned this duty.
- Several landowners in the area east of 15th Street North expressed interest in the schedule and details of that project for improving the intersection of River Drive with 15th Street. Mike Wagner explained that that project has been approved as a categorical exclusion and will begin construction in 1994. (See more discussion above for schedule of the proposed action and two other projects in the River Drive corridor.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- Dan Huestis mentioned the highway designers should be aware that the City's old ash dump underlies the entire project area and consists of large vertical fills of ashes.

UTILITIES

- Matt Quinn of Montana Power Company pointed out the location of the new intersection at 9th Street North and River Drive will be close to three existing power poles (100,000 volt overhead). That location was shown on the display board and is presented on the attached summary and map of the proposed action. Matt asked whether the alignment could be adjusted to avoid conflict with the power poles.

Mike Wagner indicated that the three poles will have to be moved in order for the future intersection to be constructed. Mike explained the power poles likely would need to be relocated in order to keep the intersection of River Drive and 9th Street North an adequate distance from the southern end of the new bridge. Desirable distance standards leave very little room to adjust the alignment at the intersection. Also, this three pole structure is less than 20 feet from the horizontal alignment of 9th Street North, upon which the Future 10th Street Connector Bridge alignment is based as well.

- Mike said the bridge design does not include a center median which could be used for a left-turn bay, meaning that the future intersection of 9th Street and River Drive will have to be located as far from the south end of the bridge as possible in order to develop a left-turn bay at the intersection. This is because auxiliary traffic (left-turn) lanes probably will be justified from a traffic flow standpoint for northbound traffic on 9th Street, as well as southbound coming off the future bridge. Movement of the intersection also would not alleviate the main problem with the power poles, which is their close proximity to the future centerline of 9th Street North, upon which the future bridge project has been designed.
- Dan Huestis said Falls Construction has a private water line (8" Asbestos Concrete - A.C.) that needs to be avoided in the project area. It travels along River Drive from about 6th Street North to the property of Falls Construction.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

- There was general agreement that throughout the study, design and construction of the proposed action it is important to "let the landowners know what is going on, because they can be of great help." The audience also agreed it is important to distribute information to people on the project mailing list before the public hearing so they can be more prepared.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m..

- END OF MEETING -

